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Mr. Tobias:

My response to your question regarding a contractor's concern, conviction, and passion for natural resources on DoD lands was less than adequate. Please consider the following.....

Contractors are profit motivated. That's the nature of their business and they would not successfully compete if they operated otherwise. They will perform their duties to the extent that they have to, according to a Statement of Work, and no more. If they can do a little less and get by with it they will. It all relates to their profit margin. Obviously, the bigger the better. No one would argue with that line of reasoning.

Natural resources conservation on DoD lands is not an 8-hour day, 40-hour week job. Many of us put in far more than that and are often not compensated. Why? Because we know in order to accomplish our responsibilities we must go the extra mile. We are more than willing to do this because the resources we are responsible for are precious to us. We didn't spend many years in school and many more on the job developing a keen sense and appreciation of the world around us to simply walk away from an uncompleted task because there is nothing on a piece of paper that says we have to do it. Contractors will not go the extra mile and the resources and the military mission they support will suffer.

One more example.....A major military training operation is in it planning stages that will involve many personnel, tons of supplies and equipment, and cover a great deal of terrain. This major undertaking requires an environmental assessment due to its nature and the fact that several federal and/or state laws are in jeopardy of being violated without proper discretion. The Commanding General must be briefed about the regulations and requirements he must address during this planning phase. A contractor managing the natural resources for this general briefs him/her on the situation. The general finds it nothing more than a distraction and of no obvious consequence to his important mission. What's a contractor to do in such a situation? Does he continue to push for the proper course of action regarding environmental documentation? Does he repeatedly seek communication with this general in an attempt to reason with him? Not if he or she wants to keep their job!

In contrast, the DoD natural resources manager will not give up. Their primary responsibility is to advise their Commander of DoD's responsibility to the resources that have been entrusted to him by the American people. Ignoring adequate documentation for this general's training operation is not even a viable alternative. Who is going to take the necessary course of action.....the contractor or the DoD natural resources manager?

Contractors lack the capability to ensure the proper conservation of natural resources on DoD lands.